

BIBLE READING FOR 2023

WEEK #49

HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH & MALACHI

12-03-23

Monday - Haggai 1 - Zechariah 1

Wednesday - Zechariah 8-10

Friday - Malachi 1-4

Tuesday - Zechariah 2-7

Thursday - Zechariah 11-14

Haggai is the second shortest book of the Old Testament. It is from the post-exilic period and is focused on one subject and that is the rebuilding of the temple. The Jews had been allowed to return to Jerusalem by Cyrus in 536 B.C. Work on the temple had begun but after laying the foundation it was interrupted and ceased for 16 years. It was not until 520 B.C. at the urging of Haggai that the work was resumed. The book of Haggai is a series of four sermons that help the Jews to see the importance of finishing the temple of God. They had houses of their own but had refused to complete the Lord's house. Haggai suggests to them that various problems they were experiencing were because of their misplaced priorities. He pleads with them to recognize that if they do what they should in service to God it will benefit them in every aspect of life. His efforts are successful and work on the temple begins once again.

An outline of Haggai: 1.) Repentance and encouragement 1
2.) Punishment of the past and hope of the future 2

Zechariah is the longest and most difficult book of the Minor Prophets. Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, began prophesying in the eighth month of the second year of Darius (520 B.C.). This means he was contemporary with Haggai, who began receiving the word of the Lord in the sixth month of the same year. Most conservative scholars date the writing of this book at 520-518 B.C. Haggai and Zechariah complemented each other in their efforts to get the Jews to finish their work on the temple. The rebuking and admonition of Haggai was balanced well with the more encouraging tone of Zechariah. The people needed to hear the message of each prophet to see fully what their situation was and how to properly remedy it. As a result of their combined efforts the Jews renewed their building of the temple in 520 B.C. and completed it in 515 to 516 B.C. Much of what Zechariah had to say in the latter part of his book related to the coming of the Messiah and the great blessing of salvation He would bring to spiritual Israel, the church.

An outline of Zechariah: 1.) Zechariah's eight visions 1-6
2.) Question about fasting and the Lord's response 7-8
3.) Zechariah's two oracles 9-14

Malachi is the last of the Minor Prophets and the final book of the Old Testament. His ministry is thought to have been around 445-425 B.C. Because the sin that Israel has fallen back into in Malachi parallels that dealt with in Nehemiah 13, it is suggested that Malachi served as a prophet while Nehemiah was working with God's people. The method that Malachi used in recording his prophecy involved a question and answer technique. He would raise a question or objection that was typical of the Jews' thinking, and then would give the appropriate response to every point addressed. In this last writing of the literary prophets he tells his readers to look for the coming of Elijah. This would be the individual that would prepare the

way for the Messiah by turning the hearts of the people back to God. Christ later identified John the Baptist to be the one referred to as Elijah in this prophecy.

An outline for Malachi: 1.) Sinful priests and treacherous husbands 1-2
2.) The coming of the Purifier 3
3.) Look for Elijah 4

Questions for Haggai, Zechariah & Malachi:

- 1.) Who were the two men that Haggai told the word of the Lord to in Haggai 1:1?
- 2.) In Zechariah 2:5, why does it say that Jerusalem would be a city without walls?
- 3.) What was said about Zerubbabel in Zechariah 4:9?
- 4.) According to Zechariah 13:1, what would be opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem one day?
- 5.) In Malachi 1:8, what were the priests doing that was evil?

Answers to questions for Week #48 – Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk & Zephaniah:

- 1.) That the Spirit of the Lord was impatient.
- 2.) He would tread their iniquities under foot and cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.
- 3.) Their hearts would be melting, their knees knocking, their bodies would be in anguish and their faces pale.
- 4.) The righteous man will live by his faith.
- 5.) The men who were stagnant in spirit and said in their hearts “The Lord will not do good or evil.”